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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Conversation with King Zog of Albania on 8 September 1952

1. I called on King Zog at his villa in Alexandria on 8 September 1952 to obtain a preliminary report on the activities of his emissaries to Yugoslavia who had returned to Egypt that morning. The emissaries were Irfan Bey Ohrida and Col. Baralla, who were accompanied during their trip and conversations with the Yugoslavs by Lutfi Tozan, the Turk who functioned as Zog's representative in the initial contact with Marshal Tito. The conversations between this 3-man delegation and the Yugoslavs took place during the last days of August.

2. Zog stated that his delegation traveled from Turkey to Skoplje, Yugoslavia, through Greece, and that Irfan Bey was his spokesman, Tozan accompanying the party merely because he was instrumental in arranging with the Yugoslavs for the meeting. The party were cordially received by the Yugoslavs and taken to an estate in the country not far from Skoplje itself, where they remained for the duration of the talks, which lasted 2½ days. The Yugoslav spokesman were referred to as Colonel Branko and Cedo. As a result of inquiries made among some of the other Yugoslavs he met, Irfan Bey determined that their full names were Branko Stankovic and Cedomir Mijovic. The former appeared a very much higher level person than the latter, possibly a representative of the UDB Headquarters or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as he seemed to be thoroughly familiar with, and spoke authoritatively on, policy matters. His accent suggested that he is a Croat. The latter, who was introduced as Col. Cedo, spoke like a Montenegrin, had a withered or injured arm, and was presumably a lower level UDB official who specialized in Albanian affairs, as he appeared very familiar with Albanian affairs and numerous Albanian personalities.

3. Zog said that after some initial discussion of the object of the visit, Col. Cedo indicated to Irfan Bey that it was the Yugoslav understanding, based on Tozan's initial conversation in Belgrade, that King Zog is primarily interested in funds and arms. Irfan Bey replied that this was an error in the Yugoslav interpretation of the King's message which Tozan was instructed to deliver. The King is interested in developing a plan for the liberation of his country which would be carried out in complete agreement with the Yugoslavs, and that if outside material assistance were necessary, the Yugoslavs could act on his behalf to secure such assistance from the United States. The main consideration in the King's mind is the preservation of

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Albania's independence and the integrity of her present frontiers. Col. Branko at this point said with considerable enthusiasm that the Yugoslavs are grateful for King Zog's approach and are now convinced that they are dealing with serious people, not adventurers. In this connection the Yugoslavs took Irfan Bey and Col. Daralla aside at a later stage in the meetings and asked whether Mr. Tosan could not be eliminated from future discussions.

4. Irfan Bey then explained to the Yugoslavs that neither he nor Col. Daralla are political men, and that the main purpose of their visit is to request the Yugoslavs to send a suitable man to talk things over with King Zog directly. Col. Branko replied that someone would be sent to talk with the King in the near future. When Irfan Bey suggested the possibility of initiating talks through the Ambassador in Cairo, Col. Branko firmly indicated that this could not be done. In view of the manner in which this last suggestion was turned down, Irfan Bey received the impression that possibly the Yugoslavs do not have full confidence in their Cairo ambassador, although it is not impossible that they have other reasons for considering him unsuitable for direct dealings with the King.

5. Col. Cedo produced a list of some forty names which he showed to Irfan Bey and then asked whether the King would "accept" these people. When asked to clarify what was meant by "accept", Irfan Bey was told that the question was whether the King would pardon them and allow them to kiss his hand. Irfan Bey was not allowed to retain the list, but he noted that it contained not only key personalities in the Yugoslav-sponsored Priaren Committee and a number of Serbophile Albanians presently in Yugoslavia, but also a number of persons now in Albania, including at least six Titoist-type Communists who are presently in the Hoxha regime. Among these latter was one who, Irfan Bey believes, is a general. In addition, the list contained a number of persons in the Albanian emigration such as Muharrem Bajraktar, Said Kryeziu, Abas Kupa, and Ojon Markagjoni. Among the Albanian communists on the list were Mulin Pera, Madji Leshi, and Dalip Nehu. Another name noted by Irfan Bey was that of Lutfi Spahiu, secretary of the Priaren Committee, who was described by Col. Cedo as very loyal to the King. Irfan Bey replied that he felt sure the King would pardon and be glad to work with all Albanians willing to participate in the struggle for the liberation of their country, but that it would be better to take the question up directly with the King.

6. The Yugoslavs then asked what the King would do with the Priaren Committee if he were to lead the fight for liberation. Irfan Bey replied that this was another question that had better be put directly to the King, but that he believed the King ready and willing to work with all groups and organizations which can contribute to the fight for freedom. Then the Yugoslavs asked what the King would do with regard to the Anglo-American Committee for a Free Albania, which is presently based in Rome. Irfan Bey replied that he felt sure the King's attitude toward that committee would be the same as toward the Priaren Committee, namely that he would try to

* Myslim Peza (?)

* * Dali Nadreu (?)

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work with both. When Col. Cedo said that the Committee in Rome is financed by foreign funds, Irfan Bey asked, "But who is paying the Priaren Committee?" This question produced general laughter and the discussions went smoothly on to the next item on the agenda.

7. Col. Branko asked why King Zog had done nothing so far to promote a revolution in his country. Irfan Bey replied that the answer was to be found largely in the attitude of Albania's neighbors. The King, he said, did not wish to act until there were adequate guarantees that the country would not be torn apart. At this point, Col. Branko said that Yugoslavia stands firmly in favor of the preservation of Albania's territorial integrity and that the Yugoslav Government has already informed the Greek Government that any Greek action against Albania would be regarded as an attack on Yugoslavia. This, Col. Branko continued, can be taken by King Zog as a guarantee of Albania's present boundaries.

8. In discussing the manner in which a revolution could be started, Irfan Bey explained that, in general terms, King Zog felt that the action could begin at least 30 to 40 kilometers from the Yugoslav border. Col. Cedo said, "We thought of doing it differently."; but that the idea of starting the fighting at some distance from the Yugoslav border was certainly an excellent one. On the final day of the conversations, Col. Branko informed King Zog's spokesmen that the Yugoslavs would much prefer to have Albania liberated by the Albanians, including King Zog, but that, if the Albanians themselves lacked the capability to overthrow the Hoxha regime, the Yugoslavs will have to do so in their own way as the present state of affairs in Albania is intolerable.

9. In parting, Irfan Bey asked whether the Yugoslavs had any final recommendations. The Yugoslavs replied that they had two; the first is that King Zog maintain the greatest possible secrecy and be absolutely sincere in his dealings with the Yugoslavs; the second is that King Zog should bring no other foreign power into these discussions until he has reached a complete agreement with the Yugoslavs. The Yugoslavs also stated that should King Zog and his family find it undesirable to remain in Egypt any longer, he would always be welcome in Belgrade where a home would be provided for him.

10. Irfan Bey commented on the extreme bitterness with which the Yugoslav spokesman referred to the Soviet Union.

11. King Zog said that he felt that these talks with the Yugoslavs were taking on an extremely interesting character, but that he was not yet sure that the Yugoslavs were interested in real cooperation. He felt that they may be either trying to find out more about his own assets or to develop some means for making use of him and his name in furthering their own interests in Albania. He considers it essential for the United States to be brought into any final action leading to the overthrow of the present Albanian regime

because

because of fears that without American participation, Albania cannot hope to remain a free and independent state. He is going to insist that the Yugoslavs agree to submit any final plan for the liberation of Albania to the United States for approval, and he feels that the final form of government after a successful revolution should be determined by a national plebiscite held under United Nations supervision and control.

12. In view of the Yugoslav promises to send a representative to talk with him in Egypt or elsewhere, King Zog asked me whether it would be possible for me to visit him when his talks with the Yugoslavs are in progress, as he would like to consult with me as the discussion develops. He realizes that this would have to be arranged very carefully in order to keep it secret from the Yugoslavs.

[Acting Chief, SE]

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